PSP

- RACIAL ISSUES 4
- PRAISE FROM EU ENVOY 4
- BUILDING MUSCLE 5
- STRONG TALK 6
- GENDER ISSUES 8
- PARLIAMENT 10
- WHAT'S UP 11
- PROVINCIAL ARTICLES 12
- SPEAKER'S FORUM 20
- JUPMET 21
- BOOK REVIEW 22
- FINANCE 24

NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT PROGRAMME • EDITION 12, MAY-SEPT 2001

A PARTNERSHIP PROJECT BETWEEN THE SPEAKERS' FORUM AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

PSP WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

Beyond racism

Delegates from South Africa's provincial legislatures will join the estimated 10 000 representatives of governments and other institutions from around the world at the week-long World Conference Against Racism which starts in Durban on 31 August.

Deputy Secretary of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature Joe Mkhize said a number of executive members and MPLs would attend the conference. He said the issues on the conference agenda were particularly relevant to the provincial legislatures because of the role these

continued on page 2 ▸

▲ Racism can, will and must be defeated.

PSP EDITORIAL

Welcome to this edition of the PSP Newsletter, the first in the Phase 6 funding cycle. This phase will probably be the last, bringing to a close a six-year programme of capacity building in the legislative sector of South Africa.

This issue highlights the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that begins on 31 August in Durban. The conference theme, "United to Combat Racism: Equality, Justice and Dignity", speaks to us as the host nation and, indeed, to the world. The hope is that participants will draw strength from the conference and that its resolutions will serve to advance the establishment of a truly non-racial society – one world of many nations and many cultures.

Building such a society demands vibrant democracy in action. An article in this issue by Gauteng Speaker Firoz Cachalia argues that strong legislatures are a key element in vibrant democracies. We hope that supporters and opponents of his comments will enter into this important debate.

Write to us and let's debate ideas.

Also relevant to the project of building democracy is a report on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference held recently in South Africa. Drawing delegates from across the Southern African region, the conference focused on challenges and common approaches.

Another critical element for a vibrant democracy is the full participation of women. We report on a recent conference held by Parliament on the theme "Enhancing the Participation of Women in the Law-Making Process" and the work of the WEU.

Promoting and enabling the participation of people at large is another core element of a vibrant democracy. Thus the launch of the PSP book *A People's Government, The People's Voice* was an important milestone. Charting the way forward for public participation in South Africa, the book has been well received across the country. Visit our site at: www.eupsp.gov.za to download your own copy.

Ensuring good management practices is one of the key pillars of this programme. To this end the PSP, in association with the University of Stellenbosch, developed an Executive Leadership Programme (a JUPMET initiative) aimed at enhancing the skills base of senior and middle management in the legislatures. The programme is a one-year, certificate-based initiative. Credits achieved could count towards a Master's degree in legislative management.

Finally, it is significant that we began Phase 6 by hearing from the clients of the PSP. Our workshop with Speakers, Deputy Speakers and Secretaries afforded programme staff the insight we need to make the final phase of the PSP a great success.

We hope you enjoy this edition.

Hoosain Kagee

▲ **The conference venue on Durban's Esplanade.**

institutions had played in the country's transition from apartheid to democracy.

"In our case, there has been talk during legislature sittings about efforts to get rid of racism in all its forms. There is no doubt that this will benefit us immensely. Racism manifests itself in many ways. Every MPL and member of the public has a vested interest in this conference," he said.

Maredi Mogodi, Public Relations Co-ordinator of the Gauteng Legislature, said the importance of the conference could not be underestimated.

"Our coat-of-arms has an inscription that reads 'Unity in diversity'. In order to garner all the energies from all citizens of Gauteng to living this inscription, we will be following the proceedings in Durban very closely," he said.

Mogodi said that while MPLs and staff would be participating in the conference, the decision-making process would rest with national delegates.

The North West Legislature convened an Anti-Racism and Xenophobia Conference as a follow-up to the National Conference on Racism last year and as part of its preparations for the World Conference Against Racism. North West Premier Popo Molefe said the *lekgotla* was a significant milestone in the march to a future free of racial and other domination.

"After seven years of democratic rule in South Africa, it is disheartening to still have the scourge of racism permeating all spheres of South African life. It stalks our country's psyche in such a way that attacks of a racial nature are becoming a daily occurrence. Our country runs the risk of being racially torn apart. Let us seize the moment to defeat our common enemy," Molefe said.

Abie Ditlhake, director of the South African National Non-Governmental Coalition (Sangoco), said that by developing a shared approach to the conference, civil society leaders would be taking another important step towards engaging South Africans in all provinces in confronting racism.

Sangoco, which is host of the conference's NGO Forum, says it hopes to rise to the challenge laid down in the Millennium Statement on Racism which was adopted in Johannesburg last year.

The EU has indicated a willingness to recognize that former colonial powers in their group have some responsibility for economic and political problems arising from colonialism. France, Britain, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands are former colonial powers.

The United States has insisted that the conference should focus on how to alleviate discrimination and not revisit issues such as reparations for slavery and whether Zionism can be equated with racism. State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher has said that the level at which the US participates in the meeting will depend on how these issues are raised.

A two-week meeting held in Geneva in June to draw up an agenda for the conference ended in deadlock over whether countries that prospered from slavery and colonialism should formally apologise for the suffering they caused – and pay compensation.

The US stance is backed by several Western countries, including Britain and Canada, which believe the issue is too divisive and complex to be addressed in Durban. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has also agreed that the conference should not focus on the past.

Colin Powell, who is the first black to head the US diplomatic corps, has condemned suggestions that the Bush White House is full of "latent racists" because of its stance on the conference.

"We are hoping to find language that will deal with the problem of slavery and deal with the other problem with respect to Israel, because we do want to go to the conference," he said.

Washington stayed away from the two previous UN conferences on racism, held in 1978 and 1983, in protest against similar attempts to characterise Zionism as racist.

Human Rights Watch has called for reparations to counter the most severe continuing effects of slavery, segregation and other extreme forms of racism.

"Groups that suffer today because of slavery or other severe racist practices should be compensated by governments responsible for these practices," said Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch. "Those most seriously victimized today by past wrongs should be the first priority for compensation."

He also proposed the establishment of national and international panels to examine the effect of the slave trade on groups rather than particular individuals. The panels should serve as truth commissions, aiming to reveal the extent to which a government's past racist practices contributed to contemporary deprivation domestically and abroad. They should educate the public, acknowledge responsibility, and propose methods of redress.

Essop Pahad, Minister in the Office of the Presidency, said he hoped that more than a declaration would come out of the conference. The need was for a programme of action outlining steps to be taken against racism and its related problems.

As a precursor to the main event, a one-day Youth Conference on Racism was scheduled for 27 August, while about 1 000 organisations will participate in an NGO Forum from 28 August to 1 September.

The R100-million gathering is the third international conference on racism and the first to be held since apartheid's demise.

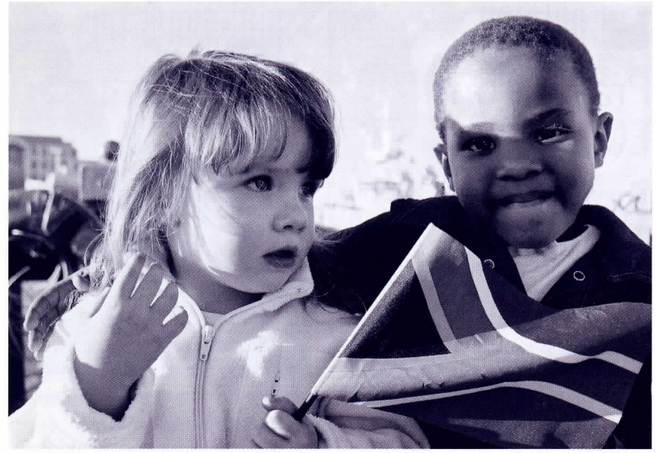
- Do you have a view on the World Conference on Racism? Write to us at: eupsp@iafrica.com
- The website for the World Conference on Racism is: unhchr.ch/html/racism/

Craig Urquhart
Pan African News Agency Correspondent

Aims of the conference

The declared aims of the World Conference Against Racism are:

- to review progress made against racial discrimination, to reappraise obstacles to further progress and to devise ways to overcome them;
- to increase the level of awareness about racism and its consequences;
- to formulate recommendations on ways to increase the effectiveness of UN activities and mechanisms through programmes aimed at combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- to review political, historical, economic, social, cultural and other factors leading to racism;
- to consider ways to better ensure the application of existing standards and implement existing instruments to combat racism;
- to formulate recommendations to further action-oriented national, regional and international measures to combat all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- to draw up concrete recommendations for ensuring that the United Nations has the financial and other necessary resources for its actions to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.



▲ **Here's hoping for a rainbow future.**

Spectrum of comment

"The global community intends developing institutions to ensure that racism is rooted out of the global network. We want to move away from societies who discriminate against each other."

WCAR chief executive officer, Mandla Memela

"I would hope that this conference will be forward looking, will be constructive. Obviously, it's a conference that should neither condone the past nor become captive to the past."

UN Secretary, General Kofi Annan

"The issue of racism must be protected from the temptation to throw everything into the basket."

SA Human Rights Commission chairperson, Barney Pityana

"Now it is fully recognised by the EU, by the United States, by all parties, particularly by developing countries, that in order to have a forward-looking agenda, we must together as a global community address the past."

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson

"We really hope that this conference will successfully address the painful issues of racism, which infortunately are still prevalent in the world, rather than being hijacked by narrow political agendas which have nothing to do with race."

Israeli Ambassador to South Africa, Tova Herzl

"My position is that demanding billions of dollars in reparations is an insult to our dead, to our race. It is absurd that you could pay up a certain number of dollars and then slavery ceases to exist, it is cancelled out, and there is the receipt to prove it. We still suffer the effects of slavery and colonialism, and that cannot be evaluated in monetary terms. I find that not only absurd, but insulting."

President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal

"We do not see any reason whatsoever for anyone to be violent in Durban on an issue about racism. My message to protesters is... they are welcome to protest peacefully, but we will not tolerate violence."

Foreign Affairs Minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

"Our people are under siege, our people are being bombarded, our people are under occupation. We were against the Bantustan government in South Africa and we are against the Bantustan government in Israel."

Palestinian Ambassador to South Africa, Salman El-Herfi

"No one should be able to badger us into silence through threats of boycott and related silliness."

SA Minister of Education, Kader Asmal

"It is ironic that the nation that claims to be the defender of the free world consistently uses its considerable economic and military might to pursue its own narrow interests."

Director of Sangoco, Abie Ditlhake

PSP CONFERENCE

Parliament gets involved

The South African Parliament will be hosting a meeting of parliamentarians on 2 September 2001 as part of the activities of the World Conference against Racism. The meeting will focus on actions that parliaments can take to follow up on the objectives of the conference.

ISSUES

The meeting will enable parliamentarians to exchange views on concrete issues on which parliaments and their members can take action.

It will also provide a parliamentary dimension to the intergovernmental negotiations on the Declaration and Programme of Action as a parliamentary message will be delivered to the plenary conference in Durban.

The presiding officers have requested the preparatory committee to include parliamentarians in the government delegation and parties have been advised of this request.

NGO FORUM

Parliament will be participating in the NGO Forum, which precedes the conference. In addition to the presiding officers, the following 8 MPs have been designated by their parties to attend the forum: Mr P Mokaba, Mr N Nhleko, Dr J Benjamin, Mr M Ramgobin, Mrs N Mapisa-Nquakula (ANC), Ms M Smuts (DP), Mr JH van der Merwe (IFP) and Mrs S Camerer (NNP).

Dr Ginwala will chair the session on institutional reform organised by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development on 4 September 2001. She will also be chairing the Workshop on Ninety Years of Non-Racial Struggle on 28 August 2001. ■

Source: www.parliament.gov.za

▼ **From l to r (front): Mr Tutu Ralane (Chair of Chairs), Mrs Hixsonia Ntombela (ANC provincial chief whip), Ambassador Michael Lake (European Commission); back: Mr Jonathan Mitchell (European Commission), Mr Aaron Mnguni (ANC whip), Mr Sello Tshabalala (liaison officer), Mrs Elsabe Rockman (secretary to the legislature), Mr Bonisile Gqwabane (executive secretary to the speaker).**

PSP OPINION

Praise from EU envoy

I arrived in South Africa as autumn drew to a close. Between then and now I have had the opportunity to see a number of projects that enjoy European Union support. In fact, one of my first visits was to Bloemfontein where, during a stop-over at the Free State Provincial Legislature, I was pleased to meet the staff of the Parliamentary Support Programme. They shared with me not only the successes of their programme but also the challenges to improved service delivery.

In addition, I was privileged to visit a number of small-scale entrepreneurial agricultural projects, including a dairy, a hydroponic nursery and a chicken broiler facility. Projects like these are the very essence of what development and upliftment are all about and in South Africa they are the hallmark of a rapidly transforming society and country.

Despite the many challenges to getting such projects off the ground, the tenacity and sheer hard work of many communities pays off. To those whose projects I have had the opportunity to visit: well done and congratulations!

A further issue that South Africa, and indeed the world, is confronted by is that of overcoming racism. Indeed, the upcoming World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held in Durban, reflects both the growing international concern at the rise of these scourges and recognition of the challenges and opportunities in combating them. The conference will most certainly focus on action-oriented and practical steps to eradicate racism, including measures of prevention, education, protection and the provision of effective remedies.

This conference deserves all our support, especially in the light of calls from the European Commission, the European Parliament and civil society in Europe for a number of years for European anti-discrimination legislation. Heightened public awareness in 1997, declared the "European Year against Racism", resulted in the establishment of a European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. In 1999 the European Community acquired, for the first time, the power to take legislative action to combat racial discrimination. The most recent reinforcement of fundamental rights and non-discrimination in the European Union came with the proclamation of a Charter of Fundamental Rights in December 2000.

The World Conference will provide an opportunity for the European Union to learn from the experiences of the rest of the world.

Michael Lake
EU Ambassador ■

▲ **From l to r: Mr Tate Makgoe (former Free State MEC: Agriculture), Ambassador Michael Lake (European Commission) with the project manager of the EU-sponsored spinach and rose hydroponics scheme.**

PSP CPA WORKSHOP

Building muscle

"Strengthening Parliaments" was the theme of a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) workshop which was hosted in July by the Gauteng Legislature.

Participants included representatives from Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland as well as South Africa's National Council of Provinces and National Assembly.

The CPA is united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms, and by pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy.

Public Relations Assistant for the Gauteng Legislature Takalani Ndou said the workshop was part of an overall programme of professional development. It was held with financial assistance from the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom.

The workshop aimed to:

- examine issues relevant to the relationship between legislatures and executives, including accountability and scrutiny of the executive;
- asses the work and responsibility of committees;
- asses parliamentarians and the media with particular reference to the role of MPs as representative of the people.

"We feel these objectives were achieved," said PR co-odinator for the Gauteng Legislature Maredi Mogodi. "The workshop enabled parliamentarians to focus on issues that were relevant to them, issues that will help them strengthen their own law-making institutions".

The CPA is a charity registered under the laws of the United Kingdom. Its stated purpose is to promote knowledge and understanding of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural systems within a parliamentary democratic framework. It undertakes this mission with particular reference to the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations and to countries having close historical and parliamentary associations with it.

It provides the sole formal means of regular consultation among members of Commonwealth parliaments. It fosters co-operation and understanding among them and promotes the study of and respect for parliament. Its role is endorsed by Commonwealth parliaments and heads of government.

It pursues its objectives by means of:

- annual Commonwealth parliamentary conferences, regional conferences and symposiums;
- interparliamentary visits;
- parliamentary seminars and workshops;
- publications, notably *The Parliamentarian* and two newsletters; and
- Parliamentary Information and Reference Centre communications.

Branches of the CPA now exist in 142 national, state, provincial and territorial parliaments, with a total membership of over 14 000 MPs.

Nearly 30 new legislatures joined or rejoined the CPA in the 1990s: Cameroon; Fiji; new devolved regional assemblies in Canada, India and the United Kingdom; Maldives; Mozambique; Nigeria; Seychelles; South Africa and its provinces; Uganda; and Zanzibar in Tanzania. Pakistan and its provinces were members until the 1999 coup.

- The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association website address is http://www.comparlhq.org.uk

Craig Urquhart ■

▼ **Delegates at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association workshop.**

PSP OPINION

Strong talk

Good governance depends on the development of a strong Parliament and strong provincial legislatures. This is so because the legislatures play a crucial role in identifying the needs of the people, articulating their experiences and views, and thus determining national (and regional) political agendas. As oversight bodies, they help to both identify problems of policy failure and overcome bureaucratic inertia.

Building strong legislatures depends on the capacity of all the parties involved to take a long-term view on the decision-making structures and management systems that are appropriate for a "people's parliament". The long-term goal of strength in the legislative sector should not be compromised by reactions to immediate political pressures or considerations of short-term political advantage.

Secondly, building strong legislatures should be approached in the spirit of what Brazilian social activist Roberto Unger calls "democratic experimentalism". He notes that representative democracies "can assume many different institutional forms, with radically different consequences for society". Thus the institutions of a constitutional democracy, including representative bodies, should be regarded as a point of departure, not the end point, in the project of building a democratic, socially just and humane society.

We should therefore constantly be thinking about how our Parliament and provincial legislatures should evolve as institutions to reflect our people's ideals and interests.

Most theorists of transition would agree that the framers of our Constitution were correct to choose a parliamentary, as opposed to a presidential, system of democratic government. Together with proportional representation, the parliamentary system tends to produce inclusive government, rather than the "winner takes all" outcome common in presidential systems.

▲ **Firoz Cachalia, Speaker, Gauteng Legislature.**

Since the political majority in Parliament also controls the government, the executive and the legislature are "fused", reducing the likelihood of conflict between the two branches of government which is common in American-type systems based on a clearer separation of powers.

However, parliamentary systems tend also to produce an imbalance in the relationship between the executive and the legislature, and a subordination of the internal workings of the legislature to the requirements of the executive. This is so because members of the legislature, who are subject to party discipline, are at the same time required to subject the executive members of their own party to critical scrutiny. This can lead to a weakening of the legislature's investigative and oversight roles and to less transparent, accountable and effective government.

In South Africa, a number of factors ensured an initial strengthening of the representative branch of government immediately after the establishment of democracy. These included the character of the governing party as a liberation movement committed to democracy, and the presence of a large number of talented, idealistic and influential leaders in both branches of government.

But danger threatens in the long term, as the composition of the governing party undergoes some inevitable change, and the political leadership becomes more closely associated with the executive. The tendency towards a weakening of the legislature may begin to prevail in the absence of a clear vision and conscious strategy to sustain the vitality of the representative branch of government.

Some commentators suggest that the unusually strong position of the governing party at present will reinforce this tendency. They fail to appreciate that a strident, media-driven style of opposition can also play a role, particularly when there is too much emphasis on the role of legislatures as a "check" and "limit" on the authority of the executive.

Question period, for instance, has the important function of providing Parliament with information which will enable it to play a role in promoting accountability and service delivery. Therefore, MPs/MPLs who belong to the governing party should be willing to question the executive on behalf of their party and the electorate. However, many are not sure that this would be appropriate.

The opposition, by contrast, approaches question period with a view to short-term tactical advantage.

The apparent purpose of question time is to bring information into the public domain. However, the prime purpose is, on the one hand, "to give the government a hard time" and, on the other, "for the government to avoid having a hard time".

So-called "strong opposition", which judges its efficacy by the number of embarrassing questions it asks, thus promotes a politics of "smoke and mirrors" and erodes the capacity of Parliament and provincial legislatures to deal constructively with the problems our society confronts.

Whatever the causes of the potential weakening of legislatures, I would argue for commitment to maintaining and strengthening the representative branches of government, since strong legislatures are consistent with notions of democracy as well as in contemporary notions of good governance.

This later aspect is of critical importance since it helps to position the South African government in the context of global cultural and political trends and improves the attractiveness of South Africa as a destination for foreign direct investment. Furthermore, strong legislatures draw on the talents, energies and expertise of all deployees to government, whereas weak legislatures tend to encourage passivity and inaction among back-benchers.

This article puts forward some embryonic ideas on institutional innovation in the hope of stimulating creative thinking.

REPRESENTATION

Representative bodies form the central pillar of democratic government. Through our system of co-operative governance incorporating provincial legislatures and the electoral system based on proportionality, the framers of our Constitution sought to reinforce representation and inclusivity. This aspect of our system helps to contain conflict by encouraging an expression of societal differences within rather than against institutions, to create a stable framework in which the governing party can govern and to sustain democracy in a complex and diverse society.

But the rituals associated with parliamentary politics and the class, gender, and racial inequalities in our society tend to demobilise popular participation in politics. It is therefore necessary to take positive steps to overcome obstacles to participation.

OVERSIGHT

The dominant, "traditional" model of parliamentary oversight emphasises the "separation of powers" and "checks and balances". While not entirely displacing this paradigm, oversight could also be thought of as a way of promoting co-operation between the executive and Parliament and in this way contributing to accelerated service delivery.

The question is how committees can use their oversight function to contribute to enhancing service delivery? A possible answer is by aiming at identifying any systemic causes of policy failure. Committees could also consider developing a set of performance-monitoring criteria (e.g. socio-economic indicators like infant mortality rates, access to potable water, nutritional status) to monitor whether the government's poverty alleviation programmes are working.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Section 92(2) of the Constitution provides that "members of the Cabinet are accountable individually and collectively to Parliament". Section 92(3)(b) requires Ministers to provide Parliament "with full and regular reports concerning matters under their control". Section 102 subjects the continuation of government to the will of Parliament.

The traditional approach to executive accountability to the legislature assumes, at least in theory, that Ministers alone exercise the powers of executive government and can be called to account. Civil servants, on the other hand, have no direct responsibility to Parliament.

But, one may argue, the realities of modern government demand a distinction between political and managerial responsibility. Failure to allow the distinction discourages candour on the part of Ministers, and is inconsistent with public sector reforms. The Public Finance Management Act, for instance, draws a clear distinction between the accountability of "executive authorities" (Ministers) and "Accounting Officers" (Heads of Departments).

Opposition parties tend to rely on the traditional conception of ministerial accountability. Ministers are routinely called upon to resign whenever things go wrong. I think there is a need to

continued on page 11 ▸

A gem of an idea

Gauteng has established a Public Participation and Petitions Office separate from the Information and Communication Directorate, with dedicated staff and budget and with a mandate to promote public participation by marginalised constituencies. The office has engaged in an extensive public education programme and has worked effectively with the committee section to promote public participation in committee hearings.

The legislature has also pioneered a petitions procedure which gives effect to the constitutional right to petition. A Petitions Committee (a kind of parliamentary Ombud) has been established, which provides citizens with a cheap form of administrative justice (to challenge termination of a grant for instance) and with a surrogate form of constituency representation (since constituents are able, whether or not their deployed representative is working, to raise matters directly with the legislature).

Both the rules and the petitions law that have been adopted place a positive obligation on the legislature to assist those who may be unable to petition (for reasons of illiteracy, for instance).

The content of the petitions indicates that some marginalised and unresourced constituencies are aware of the procedure and are using it. The petitions office has received petitions relating to a wide variety of matters, including applications for disability grants, pensions, dependants of prisoners, complaints of inaction by a Town Treasurer, inaction by the Legal Aid Board, inaction by the Soweto City Council, provision of housing in an informal settlement in Centurion, evictions in Lanceria, a proposed road in Thokoza, the land restitution process, complaints by inner-city tenants, forced removal of tenants from an informal settlement, corruption among town council officials and evictions in Chiawelo.

Parliament could perhaps think about establishing a petitions committee at national level. ■

PSP GENDER

Test phase success

The major focus of the Women's Empowerment Unit (WEU) over the past year has been the facilitation of training to increase legislative skills through capacity building. Most of the institutions in the legislative sector used this opportunity successfully.

This was a test phase, by agreement with our funders. The next phase will focus on institutional transformation, public representation from a gendered perspective, and making gender issues everybody's business by creating partnerships between men and women.

The WEU was set up by the Speakers' Forum to work for the empowerment of women and gender equality. A major objective of the WEU programme, which was drawn up on the basis of a needs assessment, is to empower women members of legislatures to execute their constitutional and social obligations namely:

- law making;
- oversight of the executive; and
- public representation from a gendered perspective.

South Africa is both a Southern African Development Community (SADC) and a Commonwealth country. Both structures have five-year plans for gender equality to which South Africa has committed itself.

If we are to meet our goal by the 2005 deadline, the WEU must ensure that both female and male public representatives are empowered to make appropriate laws, monitor implementation of plans, and represent and interact with the public on issues of concern.

The 2000-2005 plan sets targets in relation to:

- the mainstreaming of gender issues;
- the Women's Budget;
- increasing the quality and quantity of women's participation;
- establishing women's rights as human rights;
- exposing violence against women as not only a human rights issue but also a deterrent to development; and
- HIV/Aids as a gender issue.

It is a challenge. We have until 2005.

Penelope Mason (WEU) ■

▲ The Women's Empowerment Unit is working hard to empower women and establish gender equality.

A first step

A two-day conference on "Enhancing the Participation of Women in the Law-Making Process was hosted by Parliament in July. The conference was organised by the Public Participation Unit (PPU) in partnership with the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women.

About 200 participants attended from legislatures, government and civil society, including organisations involved in gender work, specifically working with women on violence, maintenance, inheritance and budget processes.

Delegates identified key issues, including existing patterns around women's engagement in the legislative process, constraints on women's participation, and the models and strategies that would best serve women.

DEMYSTIFYING

Joy Watson of the PPU programme team said that one of the key insights flowing from the different group sessions of the conference was that Parliament needed to make known to people the processes for getting involved in law making.

She said there was a need for civic education programmes and projects aimed at demystifying Parliament and providing accessible information on how it functions and how it can be engaged. These programmes should be strategically conceptualised so that they were result-orientated, sustainable and built capacity in meaningful ways, she said.

SCARCITY

Watson said the issue of scarce resources had been raised consistently as an obstacle to effective lobbying and advocacy strategies.

"Even though this has been raised from an NGO perspective, it is also true from a state perspective, i.e. the limited state resources available to engage in work of this nature. The work of the PPU is funded largely by an external donor, at this point the European Union. Because of these limitations, there is a need to ensure that resources are utilised in effective, strategic ways," she said.

VULNERABLE

The needs of the most socially vulnerable were also raised across conference groups.

"Because of resource constraints, the PPU's priority target group is the marginalised sector of society, those who do not have the resources at hand to easily participate in the public arena. We acknowledge that participation is still dominated by those who have ready access and the resource power to make their voices heard – largely men and those with economic and social power.

"We therefore are committed through our work to engaging the voices of those who are socially vulnerable. Issues of gender, poverty, race and spatial location i.e. the rural-urban divide, are therefore very important to us," Watson said.

A number of suggestions were made in regard to initiatives which the PPU should pursue. These included road-shows, pamphlets, posters and other publication materials, interactive projects and radio. (The PPU is in the process of launching a national radio campaign which will be flighted on a sample of community radio stations in each of the provinces).

Joint Monitoring Committee chairperson Pregs Govender said the workshop report would be tabled in Parliament so that every MP, including members of the executive, would receive it. At the end of the process, the committee would produce its own report, focusing on the commitments made by ministers.

Govender noted that the conference should be seen as a first step.

"When I am no longer sitting in this chair and one of you is sitting in this chair, this process must continue," she said. ■

▲ **The needs of the most socially vulnerable were addressed at the conference on "Enhancing the Participation of Women in the law making process" in July.**

▲ **On August 9, millions of South Africans commemorated the sacrifices women have made during a day of national festivities. The event which is celebrated with an annual public holiday marks the anniversary of the march by 20 000 women protesting against apartheid-era pass laws at the Union Buildings in Pretoria in 1956.**

PSP PARLIAMENT

House sharpens staff skills

Extensive research and a tender process were undertaken before the Parliamentary Service enlisted the services of external service providers to start a project culminating in what is now known as the Integrated Human Resources Development Plan for the Parliamentary Service.

The project's aim is to transfer skills to employees, with particular emphasis on ensuring smoothness and continuity when positions and responsibilities are handed over. The EU Parliamentary Support Programme was approached for funding and the project kicked off in May 2000.

EQUITY

First on the agenda were phases that needed immediate attention in order to comply with the Employment Equity and Skills Development Acts. A Human Resources Manager was appointed as Employment Equity Officer for the Parliamentary Service, and an Employment Equity Forum comprising all relevant stakeholders in the institution was established to steer the process forward. Numerous awareness campaigns, workshops and training on the Employment Equity Act were conducted in Parliament.

SKILLS

The next step was to compile an Employment Equity Plan for the Parliamentary Service. A draft was presented to the Management Board in September/October 2000 and approved by the board late last year after a number of amendments.

In regard to the Skills Development Act, the institution registered with the PSETA, appointed a Training and Development Manager as Skills Development Facilitator, and established a Skills Development Forum.

Consultants conducted an in-depth analysis of the workforce to establish skills shortfalls and training requirements. An extensive awareness campaign followed and interviews were conducted with all managers and employees.

This process culminated in the submission of a Workplace Skills Plan to the PSETA. All training in the institution is currently being conducted in accordance with this plan.

The introduction of a performance management system was the next step and is regarded as the cornerstone of the HRD plan.

▲ One of many sessions of in-depth analysis.

Parliamentary Services Human Resource Manager Joseph Tsabadi said he believed all other components of the plan would fall into place once the performance management system was operational.

"This part of the project was started later than anticipated due to circumstances beyond our control. Commencement of this phase of the plan was scheduled for October 2000 but it started on 1 February 2001," he said.

The first briefing session was attended by almost half the staff complement. This was followed by a job profiling process with all staff in the institution.

About fifteen members of staff were trained as trainers in performance management by the external service providers. Tsabadi said the aim was to ensure that the institution could maintain momentum after the external consultants withdrew.

PERFORMANCE

"Well over 700 members of staff, from high up the organisational hierarchy to the bottom, attended training workshops on performance management. About 67 training workshops were conducted altogether," he said.

It is envisaged that a contracting process will commence in August/September 2001 when performance contracts will be entered into by managers and their subordinates.

Tsabadi says the greatest challenge is to make the system work in an environment not previously exposed to a proper performance management system.

"This is especially in light of the fact that employees tend to equate it with rewards only and lose sight of the developmental aspect of it. The other challenge lying ahead is to make sure that the performance management system is integrated with other components of the HRD plan, such as remuneration and rewards, promotions policy, career management and succession planning."

Craig Urquhart ■

Gender agenda

The Women's Empowerment Unit, hosted a high level Conference with the theme of "Enhancing the Gender Agenda in the Legislative Sector" in Durban on 17 and 18 August. The event was attended by Speakers, Deputy Speakers, Provincial Secretary's, Chairpersons of Committees and Chairperson's of women's caucus. According to Deputy Speaker MMA Nyama of the Northern Province, the Chairperson of the Women's Empowerment Unit, the conference covered "Understanding Gender" by Dr Oshadi Mangena, the "National Policy Framework for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality"by Dr Ellen Kornegay, "Mainstreaming Gender" by Tanya Goldman, the "Women's Budget" by Pregs Govender Chairperson of the Committee Office of the Improvement and Quality of Life and Status of Women, and Deputy Speaker Lindiwe Maseko of Gauteng Legislature dealt with Institutional Transformation. Following the conference, a new programme will be drawn up for the next year to take forward Institutional transformation towards gender equity. ■

▸ continued from page 7

emphasise more modern notions of accountability, which do not jettison the element of resignation for malfeasance, but shift the emphasis from the apportionment of blame to the obligation to provide accurate information to the House and the correction of error.

It is arguable that the "new accountability" should require direct accountability of civil servants to Parliament/Legislatures. Again, this could have the effect of improving overall performance. Fears that this approach could lead to tensions between ministers and their officials have generally not proved to be well founded.

CAUCUSES

The role that caucuses play in governance has been neglected. I put forward the following hypothesis: strong caucuses produce strong legislatures and consequently contribute to effective governance. Conversely, weak caucuses produce weak legislatures.

Within legislatures, caucuses play a critical role in ensuring party cohesion, discipline and unity, which are essential preconditions for effective leadership by the governing party within the legislature.

Matters of parliamentary strategy and tactics should be subject to full and adequate discussion within caucus. Caucuses also play an important role in monitoring the executive. Caucuses should therefore be thought of as collectives with decision-making responsibilities on political issues, as opposed to merely administrative matters.

The transition to democracy in South Africa produced a bicameral national Parliament and nine provincial legislatures. Some of the legislatures had to be established from scratch. Others inherited parts of administrations established under the previous order.

From their inception, newly established provincial legislatures in particular faced many challenges. They had to draw their staff from a very limited pool of skills, develop systems to manage their human resources and budgets, establish committees with inexperienced members, adopt new Rules and so on and so forth.

It is not suprising therefore, that they show elements of "weakness". They sit infrequently, pass little legislation, depend on the executive for information and their budget allocations, etc.

This "weakness" undermines the project of consolidating democracy, promoting accountability, improving governance and accelerating delivery. Development and transformation of the legislative sector must therefore be a central strategic priority. **Firoz Cachalia** ■

PSP WHAT'S UP

EASTERN CAPE
- Speaker's campaign
- Religious parliament
- CPA code of ethics workshop

FREE STATE
- Commissioned research – Sesotho dictionary
- Youth parliament

GAUTENG
- Purchasing of audio-visual equipment

KWAZULU-NATAL
- Civic education programme
- Public outreach programme

MPUMALANGA
- Skills development project
- De-linking of IT systems

NORTH WEST LEGISLATURE
- Radio talk show
- Purchasing of audio-visual equipment for Chambers

NORTHERN CAPE
- Audio-visual equipment
- Commissioned research – public perceptions
- Youth parliament

NORTHERN PROVINCE
- OD political parties
- Purchasing of audio-visual equipment
- Printing of *LegisTalk*
- Youth parliament

PARLIAMENT
- Commissioned research – risk assessment study
- Democracy roadshow
- OD study in the office of the Chairperson of the NCOP

PSP EASTERN CAPE

'Just as, so'

It is natural for human beings to both anticipate and fear change, including structural changes within institutions. Therefore mechanisms are needed through which to understand and deal with the perceived threats of change. Research has established a surpising source for one such mechanism – metaphoric language.

Metaphoric or symbolic language enables people to create pictures in their heads and so to share a common understanding of the effects of change. Many programmes for change have been captured metaphorically, for example, the women's movement slogan "You strike the woman, you strike a rock". Similarly, "the struggle" is a metaphor for so many changes that have been wrought in our lives.

Metaphors have been seen traditionally as belonging to poetry and literature. They were not often afforded any credibility in the more "realistic" fields of organisational development, management and science. However, as the information age unfolds, divergent and creative thinking – including symbolic language — is finding a place in many new fields.

This article reports on a study of the EU Parliamentary Support Programme as an organisational metaphor.

Since the idea of metaphor is still fairly novel within the rigours of business reports, starting with a literary metaphor may be a defensible point of departure. Thus I offer an extract from the poem "Blue Umbrellas", which captures the richness that metaphor may add to descriptions:

The thing that makes a blue umbrella with its tail -
How do you call it?" you ask. Poorly and pale
Comes my answer.
For all I can call it is a peacock.
Now that you go to school, you will learn how we call all sorts of things;
How we mar great works with our mean recital.
You will learn, for instance, that Head Monster is not the gentleman's accepted title;
The blue-tailed eccentrics will be merely peacocks ...

A simple yet effective description of how a metaphor works is "the just as, so" approach. Just as a blue umbrella opens with a flash of colour, so a peacock unfurls its dazzling tail. Just as the legislature strives for good governance, so the PSP seeks to model good management; just as the legislature wishes to enable the mass of the people, so the PSP aims to facilitate the empowerment of legislators.

Both the legislature and the PSP seek to transform governance through various agencies and levers such as human resource development, systems and organisational development. Just as the PSP gains from applying these systems, so the legislature is strengthened. The one (legislature) uses the other (PSP) as a vehicle for transferring or carrying over pertinent ideas, ideals and resources.

Both the legislature and the PSP have vision statements containing the key words democracy and good governance. Just as the legislature can be seen as symbiotic in terms of the PSP, so the PSP can be perceived as dependent on the legislature!

According to Morgan (1980), "the most powerful use of the metaphor arises in instances in which the difference between the two phenomena are perceived to be significant but not total". Alversson (1993) agrees that there should be the right combination of similarity and difference between the source domain (PSP) and the target domain (Eastern Cape Legislature).

Findings on the metaphor-in-use show that metaphors occur normatively as an interrelated set of organising themes which are expressed metaphorically and which structure perception and behaviour (Marshak 1996). The PSP, through its six results, does present an interrelated set of organising themes. These themes are expressed through activities which have a literal application, but which carry figurative weight in terms of how they give expression to the Constitution.

A key example is: "parliamentary skills and knowledge" (Result 2) in the source domain (PSP) becomes a metaphor for better equipping the legislators in the target domain (the legislature) to perform their constitutional mandate of law making and governance. Similarly, public participation (Result 5) carries with it the constitutional impetus of facilitating public involvement, so becoming a metaphor for strengthening democracy.

To sum up for clarity: if you were to ask informed persons from the legislature for a symbol of good governance, they might answer "programmes that assist good law making". Similarly, one could suggest that PSP activities around public participation constitute a metaphoric representation of democracy.

Many of our activities translate into metaphors or are innately metaphorical. As Lakhoff and Johnson (1995) put it, "The metaphorical concepts that characterise those activities structure our present reality. New metaphors have the power to create a new reality."

I contend, firstly, that the PSP brings a new perspective on democracy and good governance. Secondly, I contend that this is exercised by the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature by giving both democracy and good governance figurative as well as concrete expression.

This is the nature of times of transformation: structural changes, development programmes, blue umbrellas... new metaphors and the new reality of democracy emerging in South Africa.

Charmaine Estment ■

Members of the Provincial Legislature Mr Mpahlwa, Mr Hobongwana, Mr Mampunye, Mr Metele and Mr Basopu attended a workshop to enhance parliamentary skills and knowledge.

Mr Mhahlo, member of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, hosts visitors to the Eastern Cape "People's Assembly".

"You strike the woman, you strike the rock," says MEC Balindlela of the Eastern Cape.

PSP FREE STATE

Ignorance is a problem

The Free State legislature has had a busy year with several projects successfully completed or in the pipeline. Participation workshops in seven different parts of the province were held between mid-March and July. Another form of public participation was the Youth Parliament where schools were invited to make themselves available for selection and to visit the legislature. The Woman's Parliament will be held on 9 August, Women's Day, enabling women to run the legislature for the day.

In May, EU Ambassador designate Michael Lake met with a delegation from the Free State Legislature. The meeting was centred on the EU Programme as a whole and Lake emphasised the EU's commitment to support democratic processes as a priority. Among issues discussed was public participation support, human resource development and the IT tender.

Between May 2001 and May 2002, the EUPSP allocated more than R800 000 to the Free State Legislature. These funds will be used for commissioned research, human resource development and management systems and public participation.

Public relations manager Reuben Standers said it has been agreed to plough more effort into public participation, an area which the legislature has identified as needing improvement.

"Most of the communities in the Free State don't know how to participate in activities of the legislature. They don't know how decisions are made about the places they live in, how a debate is held or how the public can actually contribute to making the province a better place to live," he said.

Between May 200 and May 2001, the following projects were approved and implemented by the Free State Legislature:

- The Unit for Language Facilitation and Empowerment at the University of the Free State was commissioned to develop a wordlist/dictionary of Sesotho parliamentary terms. This list of about 1 000 terms will elevate the language and ensure that all three languages of the province are accommodated in legislative proceedings.
- Price Waterhouse Coopers trained 10 senior staff members on the Public Finance Management Act to ensure improved budget skills and a better understanding of the budget process.
- Price Waterhouse Coopers also trained about 80 staff members on cultural diversity and interpersonal relations. Key outputs of the training included effective communication and teamwork, successful implementation of change processes such as the Employment Equity Act, restructuring and diversity management and an understanding of the role and challenges that diversity plays within the organisation at a personal level.
- A high speed auto-dome system was purchased to improve recordings of committee proceedings.
- Eight members of the Public Accounts Committee attended the Economics and Public Finance Course facilitated by the Economic Policy Research Institute.
- Six members of the Finance Committee attended the Economics and Public Finance Course facilitated by the Economic Policy Research Institute.
- Three publications were printed (*Guide to the Free State Legislature* booklet, *Guide to the Free State NCOP* and a brochure on public participation. The publications will be used to further public education and participation.
- A constituency training initiative enabled 35 administrators from Parliamentary constituency offices in the province to attend a workshop on how best to manage constituency offices. Another EU-funded initiative is Open Week, which will be run later this year.

Craig Urquhart ■

Perfecting committees

Committees need to orient themselves more strategically and clarify their objectives for a given term. This was the key finding of an efficacy study of the Gauteng Legislature's committee system.

"If one considers that as much as 90% of the work of the legislature relies on the committees, one can see how important it is that each committee has definite objectives to work towards," says Gauteng Legislature Chair of Chairs Mandla Nkomfe.

"Some committees were doing very good work even before our transformation process began, but others were just going through the motions, carrying out their work as if it were a ritual. What the committee transformation process has done is to show these committees how to come up with a set of plans and goals which will guide their work."

For example, the Education Committee must decide how it plans to ensure both that the Department of Education and the MEC are accountable to the legislature, and that the department's budget is linked to its stated objectives. "There is much more substance in what the committees are doing now, and better long-term planning," Nkomfe says.

There are also plans to create a balance in terms of strategy planning and research capacity to ensure that politicians have the tools they need to do their work well.

"The whole committee transformation process is geared towards enhancing our capacity for oversight and monitoring," Nkomfe says.

The legislature is also aiming for improvements in the following areas:

- input around legislation, including the process of holding public hearings for Bills that go to the NCOP;
- the budget process, particularly the capacity for budget oversight;
- the system of annual reports and how committees interface with reports from government;
- the Petitions and Public Participation system;
- the need to cluster committees for maximum impact, for example, a Development Cluster that would include the committees on Development Planning, Public Transport, and Roads; and
- the leadership and management capacity of committee chairpersons.

The legislature is making a concerted effort to invest in educating and up-grading the skills of committees.

"We've had professionals in to help us learn how to plan strategically, how to manage time, and how to create good budgets. We've also drawn on internal knowledge. If there is a committee in the national Parliament that works well, we have brought in that chairperson to hold a workshop," Nkomfe says.

Mandla Nkomfe ■

▲ **Mandla Nkomfe.**

▲ **Gideon Wessie, ISS Director.**

A brilliant system

A newly installed SAP computer programme has revolutionised the way business is conducted at Gauteng Legislature.

Installation followed a review process based on strategic plans and objectives as well as the need to respond to challenges. The change process was primarily driven by the demands of new legislation, the need for better accountability, and the need to replace outdated business systems.

The old manual systems for human resources (HR), procurement, administration and finance were not only outdated but also unintegrated. Management and financial controls were weak and loopholes in the system allowed unscrupulous people to manipulate or even erase journals, overspend on budgets, and, in worst-case scenarios, commit fraud.

Before installation of the SAP system, all the institutional support units worked in isolation from each other. Management controls were weak and no reliance could be placed on general or application controls. Access to information was restricted to staff in charge of the disciplines, who held custody of the business system in use at the time.

Now, in a few clicks of the mouse, one has a panoramic view of any transaction from start to finish. Management has access to personnel and financial information vital for executing their management responsibilities. The power of the system lies in its seamless integration of all business processes.

In regard to procurement, for example, requisitions get approved electronically by appropriate delegated authority and arrive at procurement for further processing. Access to progress on any transaction is available to anyone with a profile permitting access to such information.

Once delivery of the ordered good or service has taken place, the system will then match up all the necessary documentation, such as quotes and invoices, and will generate a goods-received note after sign off on the system. All this documentation is passed on to finance for a cheque payment.

In relation to administration, the SAP system assists asset management and control, fleet management, management of communication services, inventory, stationery, contracts, the vendor database, and travel arrangements.

Its human resources component provides good time and leave management, personnel cost planning, and training and personnel management. The new leave and attendance module is fail-safe. Leave applications are done on the system. Once they are approved, applicants are electronically advised and HR records are immediately updated.

Integrity of information for payroll purposes is the backbone of the payroll system. Controls built into the system prevent so-called ghost employees, as approval of payroll information for both existing employees and new ones is required at management levels within HR and Finance before the payroll can be released to the bank.

The real-time reporting abilities of the system are invaluable. Abundant reports are available, some of which are customisable to meet individual needs. Financial reports change every minute information is updated on the system, so month-end reporting becomes a formality. The heavy workload of the Finance Unit has been reduced since a click of a mouse button gives all managers access to the financial information they need.

The "cherry on top" is a facility called workflow, which ensures that work doesn't pile up just because somebody is on leave or away sick. SAP will redirect work to the next person up the reporting line.

Gideon Wessie ■

Reaching out

Three important initiatives are taking forward the project of building public participation in governance in Gauteng. They are a schools curriculum programme, public education on the budget process, and an efficacy study on public participation processes.

The schools programme is aimed at grade 10, 11 and 12 learners in Gauteng. Its main objectives are to introduce civic education in schools and promote public participation in the long term. It also aims to encourage the participation of young people in such democratic processes as elections and interaction with government officials and elected politicians.

The programme will reach 20 000 learners in the first year of implementation, 100 000 in the second and 200 000 in the third. The ultimate goal is for it to be a permanent learning programme in the schools of Gauteng.

A joint task team was set up to ensure smooth implementation of the programme, by agreement between Gauteng Speaker Firoz Cachalia and MEC for Education Ignatius Jacobs.

A learner's workbook was piloted in four schools and 20 000 copies have been produced with the assistance of EU funding. District officials from the Education Department were the first to be trained to use the material. They in turn have started training teachers. Pupils are next.

Training on the budget process, given by facilitators from Applied Fiscal Research of the University of Cape Town, was aimed at facilitators from the Public Participation and Petitions unit (PPP). They will then train members of the public.

Topics covered included household budgets, government division of revenue, vertical and horizontal splits, conditional grants, equitable provincial shares, identifying stakeholders in the budget process, the constitutional, legislative and policy context, intergovernmental fiscal relations, budgeting theories and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

Training included group work and input from the facilitator and was generally interactive and fun. The last part was practical, requiring trainees to do presentations to familiarise themselves with the material and practise with it.

Feedback was given on the presentations by the facilitator. After that the whole group gave evaluations of the training. It was then decided that the PPP training unit would recommend to the PPP manager that there be a meeting to map out the implementation process for budget training.

The efficacy study on public participation processes was conducted by CASE. A task team studied their report and then provided action options. It was felt that the report highlighted a number of questions without necessarily providing solutions.

A workshop of chairpersons of standing committees, office bearers and staff was convened to deliberate on the report. The workshop mandated the Speaker and the PPP Committee to undertake study tours to Germany and Scotland in order to facilitate decision making.

In February 2001, the PPP Committee and office bearers took the decision to give the PPP Committee, as opposed to Portfolio Committees, the power to deal with all petitions. The PPP Committee was also given the additional task of interacting with the PPP Unit in terms of its public education and outreach programmes.

▲ **PPP Manager Bafana Seripe.**

▲ **Research Manager Dirk Besdziek.**

After a model was chosen for dealing with petitions, the system had to be restructured in order to meet the new specifications. The Petitions Act is currently under review to streamline it in line with the model.

Bafana Seripe ■

Boning up on budgets

Members and staff of the Gauteng Legislature attended two EU-sponsored fiscal oversight courses in April and in July 2001. The courses were given by the Applied Fiscal Research Centre (AFReC).

The courses were designed to prepare students for two important initiatives in the ongoing development of governance in Gauteng province: the implementation of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 1999; and the implementation of a formal programme and budget evaluation process in the portfolio committees of the legislature.

By late 2000 a team of researchers and directors had begun to design a budget cycle model that represents the actualisation of the PFMA in the oversight operations of the legislature and its committees. The model reconciles the annual policy, budgeting and reporting cycle implicit in the PFMA with the operations of the committees, committee co-ordinators and researchers.

The budget cycle model will be complemented by a comprehensive analysis process, conducted on an ongoing basis by the committees' support staff. This analysis will be uniform throughout all portfolio committees, and will track the relationship between policy frameworks, appropriated revenue, departmental outputs, and eventual public outcomes.

The models currently being designed should be ready for implementation in 2002. Central to the ability of members to apply the models will be the training they received in fiscal oversight.

Dirk Besdziek ■

PSP KWAZULU-NATAL

Consensus at last

After months of negotiating and planning, the Organisational Development (OD) intervention project is well under way in the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature. The full process is scheduled for completion by the end of the year and a final audit will be conducted at the end of January 2002.

The internal project manager of the OD programme, Human Resources Manager Basil Dube, says he is confident of success, not least because the initiative now enjoys the support of all members.

SENSITIVE

This was not always so. The project has been a highly sensitive one in the legislature, with disagreement threatening to derail it at times.

Workshops and discussions helped to build agreement, adding value and importance to the process and culminating in a sense of general satisfaction that the interests of all parties would be served.

So far, the project has revisited constitutional functions and obligations of the legislature as well as various changes in the political environment. Consultants are looking into four broad phases of OD: organisational diagnosis, human resource policy development, job evaluation and pay structure, and development and implementation of a performance management system.

"We have now entered the job evaluation phase of the project and staff have received training in this regard," Dube said.

TASK

The legislature opted for the TASK (tuned assessment of skills and knowledge system) approach to job evaluation. Job descriptions were drawn up for every staff member and job grading is under way. The Grading Committee, set up to oversee the process, attended an intensive workshop in July, and is currently grading all posts to the level of Assistant Director. Job evaluation is expected to be completed by the end of August.

PERFORMANCE

Only select staff members had received training on performance management, Dube said. Performance management workshops were scheduled to commence mid-August. Members who had received training would conduct these workshops with the entire staff over a period of eight weeks. Dube said this process should be completed by mid-September.

While all this is taking place, the consultants will be monitoring developments and checking whether the system is working. This will also form the basis of the final audit at the end of January 2002.

ON TRACK

Dube said the OD project was on track in regard to the budget from the EU Parliamentary Support Programme.

"We have had to ask for a little bit more money, which usually happens when reports get presented to parliament and other such expenses," he said.

An organisational diagnosis report was presented to the Parliamentary Executive Board on 11 April. The report identified a number of areas that needed a work-study analysis, which has just been completed.

FINDINGS

The analysis focused on committee secretaries, finance and bookkeeping, and personnel, making appropriate structural recommendations. These findings, once finalised and tabulated, will be submitted to the Parliamentary Executive Board for scrutiny.

Craig Urquhart ■

▲ Participants at the Job Evaluation Workshop.

PSP MPUMALANGA

No time to sit back

The character of South Africa's transition to democracy and the enormous social challenges confronting the country demand action. There is no time to just sit back and celebrate the demise of white supremacy. So said Speaker of the Mpumulanga Legislature S W Lubisi in his address to the legislature on policy and the budget.

"The April 1994 democratic breakthrough and the ongoing transformation of our country are located within a host of new challenges, such as HIV and AIDS, crime, job creation, rural development, the demon of racism and, above all, the struggle to deepen our democracy," he said.

"It is critical that we understand the global context in which we are operating and to sensitise us, as members of this legislature, to individually and collectively join with the millions of our people to confront the challenges," he said.

European Union funding has played a significant role in efforts to tackle these and other issues. EU provision of much needed finances has enabled capacity building for MPLs and staff and improvement to the way MPLs interact with their constituencies, the executive and other levels of government.

The funding process began in 1998 when Simeka Management Consultants (SMC) were recruited to conduct an OD study. According to Secretary of the Mpumulanga Legislature Linda Mwale, the aim of the exercise was to identify gaps and make proposals on human resources management in particular.

The consultants identified a lack in HR policies and, in regard to management and labour issues, an inadequate communication strategy. They also identified a need for a shared vision so that the various divisions stopped operating in isolation. Finally they found a need for financial controls.

▲ Mpumalanga's Deputy Speaker Yvonne Phosa and Secretary Linda Mwale with Gauteng's Deputy Speaker Lindiwe Maseko.

The SMC study suggested an organisational structure based on a business plan for each department. It also advised grading of jobs, job valuation and job description, and finalisation of a recognition agreement between management and unions.

"We then prioritised these projects and started a process through the EU of a changed management structure and a capacity-building process where training workshops and building exercises were implemented," Mwale said. All jobs have been graded and competency profiles have been completed.

"Vision, mission and core values for the institution were established. From there we looked at key success factors for the institution and key performance areas for each division which led to the signing of performance agreements with senior managers. That project was funded by other donors, but the EU has stepped in to ensure that the process is taken further to ensure that MPLs are all involved. Through EU funding, we developed skills development and employment equity policies and plans."

This year, the Mpumulanga Legislature also embarked on a diversity management workshop funded by the EU. The purpose was to understand culture differences and diverse backgrounds while working to obtain common objectives for the institution.

"It worked out very well. The core group is currently looking at these issues and is finalising this project. Workshops will now be held in the entire legislature to resolve this issue," Mwale said.

Through EU funding, attachment programmes with other legislatures as well as national Parliament were carried out where staff and MPLs undertook exchange programmes. In addition, a website for the Mpumulanga Legislature which was funded by the EU was created and is now up and running at http://www.mpuleg.gov.za.

"We have also held a girls' parliament, a women's parliament and a youth parliament as part of enhancing public participation in the legislature process. Stakeholders and members of the community have also been encouraged to participate in the legislature. Special computer training has been offered to staff and members, while radio programmes where MPLs discuss the operation of the legislature and inform the public how it can partake in the legislative process have been held. We have embarked on this journey and we have done so much restructuring but we now need to implement the recommendations from all the material available," Mwale added.

In order to ensure that there is proper co-ordination of the various activities of the legislature, a Programming and Implementation Committee (PIC) has been established and it meets on a weekly basis to update the programme of the legislature.

The PIC is not a decision-making structure, rather it is a co-ordinating mechanism and makes recommendations to the Programming and Prioritisation Committee.

Craig Urquhart ■

PSP NORTHERN CAPE

Language difficulties

This year's theme for the official opening of the legislature was "the Northern Cape Legislature, home for the people of the province". This theme aims to bring people of the province much closer to legislative processes.

An immediate difficulty, however, is that while English is the language spoken most in the legislature, few of the province's citizens speak or understand it.

In descending order of usage, Afrikaans, Setswana and Xhosa are the main languages of the province. English comes fourth.

Taking forward constitutional protection for all eleven official languages, the South African Languages Bill includes the following stipulations:

- all languages must be treated with equal esteem;
- the status of all official languages should be enhanced; and
- members of the public should be addressed in their language of choice.

For all these reasons the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature has had to devise means to address the language issue.

It is currently offering consecutive interpretation during House sittings in the Chambers. The Chambers belong to the Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje City Council. Hence we are unable to make the structural changes necessary to accommodate simultaneous interpretation.

The legislature acquired portable interpretation equipment with the help of the European Union. This was an upgrade on an existing system we had already acquired through the EU.

The new equipment serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it will be used in the committee boardroom when the different committees hold their meetings. Secondly, because it is portable, it can be used during public hearings outside the legislature precincts and outside Kimberley.

The portable interpretation equipment can accommodate only 60 earphones. Nonetheless, it does go some way towards solving the problem of broadening public access to legislative processes.

Another development is that the Hansard service, which used to be outsourced, has become in-house. This necessitated buying a portable PA/recording system. It was acquired this year, greatly enhancing the activities of the Hansard Section.

We are doing our own recordings and using our own public address system. This will soon prove cost-effective since similar equipment had to be hired in the past. We will be able to channel the money saved to other projects.

Institutional development will become a great challenge when the European Union Parliamentary Support Programme ends. It will then be up to the legislature to make provision in its annual budget for this need.

Andrew Leroy Katz
(Hansard editor for the Northern Cape Legislature) ■

▲ **Delegate's desk unit.**

▲ **Steve Morometsi (liaison officer) with the delegates conference network.**

PSP NORTH WEST

Giant steps forward

Transformation sums up developments in North West over recent years. The province's legislature has undergone giant changes in numerous areas, including institutional arrangements, support structures, parliamentary skills and knowledge, empowering women parliamentarians, research, public participation and improving co-operation with other legislatures.

Tied in with these initiatives, a PSP-funded project completed earlier this year saw the printing and distribution of folders containing information about the legislature, what it does and how members of the public can contribute to and participate in proceedings.

In addition, a crucial undertaking by the legislature was the improvement of Information Technology systems to ensure that laws, policy documents and other relevant information become more accessible to MPLs, legislature staff and the public.

Another effort to build public participation, run between March and May, was a talk show on Radio Motsweding, which reaches the Northern Cape, Free State and parts of Gauteng. The purpose of the show was to encourage and educate the public about the work of the legislature.

▲ **L to R: Peter Makap (Personnel Officer), Christine Qwelane (Head of Personnel & Administration), Pelenomi Diemeng (Training and Development Officer) and Andrew Pheto (Human Resource Manager).**

Another interesting project has been a schools debating programme, which culminates in a grand finale to he held in the House in October.

The EUPSP also funded the appointment of a liaison officer, Pelonomi Diemeng, in 1999.

"This appointment was crucial for the improvement of service delivery," said Andrew Pheto, Human Resources Manager for the legislature. "Since the appointment of a liaison officer, the legislature moved from less than 50% usage of funds allocated by the EU to 93%."

This year the legislature has initiated several HRD programmes for members, including communication skills, public finances, computer literacy, public participation and effective oversight. Other training included financial skills for executive secretaries, policy development and management, management development programmes, financial skills for non-financial managers and an executive leadership course provided by JUPMET for senior managers. All these were made possible through the support of the PSP.

The legislature also commissioned a study on public perception of the institution. This was followed by a workshop in May on public participation and the compilation of a strategic plan to increase public familiarity with the legislature and to improve public perceptions through improved service delivery.

Part of the effort to improve service delivery to the people was a bosberaad attended by MPLs in March to revisit the legislature's vision and mission statement. The key concept to emerge was a "servant of the people" approach. A second bosberaad in April was attended by the administration with a view to establishing a hands-on approach for all legislature staff.

"A new organisational structure has been developed, job descriptions have been rewritten, jobs have been graded," Pheto said. "Enabling human resource policies are being developed, including performance management systems and a new compensation policy. We are hoping to complete this process by the end of this year." **Craig Urquhart** ■

▲ **North West legislature staff.**

▲ **Marlene Roefs with MPLs during the Public Perceptions workshop.**

▲ **MPLs at Kgora Institute during the Public Perception workshop.**

PSP SPEAKERS' FORUM

Think tank meets

A workshop bringing together Speakers, Deputy Speakers and Secretaries with the Programme Management Unit of the PSP was an important event.

Held in June, the workshop was an opportunity to review past practices and begin to chart a new programme of work for legislatures and the programme in Phase 6 (14 May 2001 to 13 May 2002).

The workshop gave each legislature an opportunity to present plans and raise concerns in relation to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The following key issues were debated:

- building sustainability;
- matters of best practice;
- monitoring and evaluation; and
- legislatures beyond the programme.

Overall the workshop met the objectives set. The PMU wishes to thank all participants for helping to make the day a productive one. ■

▲ Participants enjoy a laugh at the workshop.

◀ Mr Tsukudu, Alice Musewe, Mike Coetzee and Piet Pretorius.

▶ Presiding Officers Cachalia, Mushwana and Malavi.

▲ Smiles on the faces of think-tank members, leaders of South Africa's legislative sector.

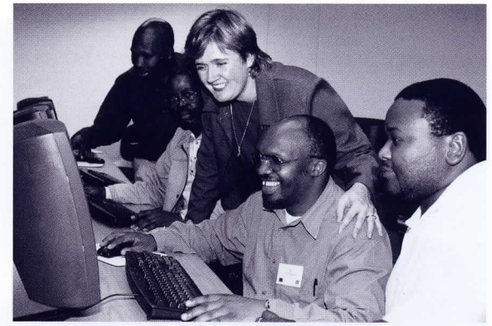
PSP JUPMET

Evolving leaders

The Constitution of our country provides for the establishment of a national Parliament and nine provincial legislatures. The provincial legislatures either had to be established anew or had to merge with other institutions formed under the previous order. In essence those established by way of the latter scenario inherited significant parts of the administrative apparatus of the previous order as well as the management practices that went with it.

These new institutions faced many challenges, including a limited pool of skills and expertise for developing systems, processes and mechanisms to manage finite resources. The need for institution building and leadership development in this sector is therefore a central strategic priority geared towards the improvement of performance, the establishment of modern parliamentary procedures and strengthening the role of legislatures in good governance and service delivery.

The establishment of a leadership development programme for Secretaries and senior managers, such as the EU Executive Leadership Programme, has long been mooted in the legislative sector. The foundational principles of such a programme were: sustainability, integration of leadership and management development, acknowledgement of existing development initiatives and adding value to career development.



▲ Learning to lead can be fun.

▲ It can be challenging.

▲ Delegates at the Executive Leadership Programme.

▲ Mike Coetzee, Secretary, Gauteng Legislature.

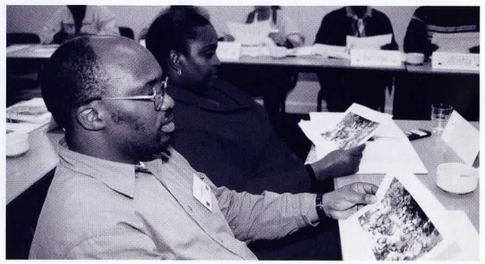
The purpose of the leadership course is to create and develop leaders and not only managers. To manage means to bring about, to accomplish, to have responsibility for and to conduct. Leading is influencing, guiding in direction, course, action and opinion. The distinction is crucial. Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing.

The difference is: the activities of vision and judgement lead to effectiveness created by leading, while the activities of mastering routines lead to efficiency created by managing.

Those of us who have attended the programme were exposed to the principles of leadership and "the learning organisation", based on the work of Peter Senge. The concept of a learning organisation comprises five disciplines: team learning, shared visions, mental models, personal mastery and systems thinking.

I must say, the learning has been great fun. The spirit of engagement and camaraderie that has developed over the three workshops held thus far is indicative of the emergence of a very enthusiastic and disciplined cadre of management in the legislative sector. As the paradigms shift and the mental models change, we can see the evolution from manager to leader.

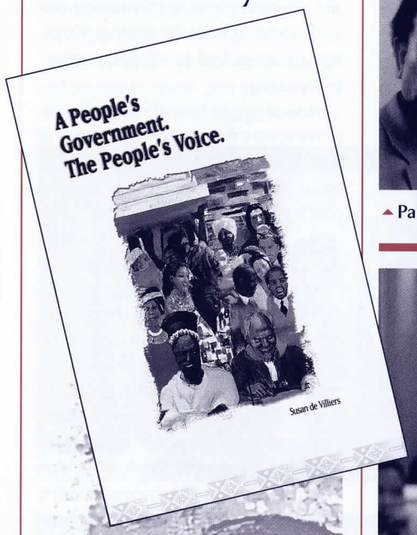
As we plot our course and chart our way on the road of development and transformation in the legislative sector, our leadership cadre will be central in developing and implementing a vision to consolidate democracy, promote accountability, improve good governance and accelerate delivery. **Mike Coetzee** ■



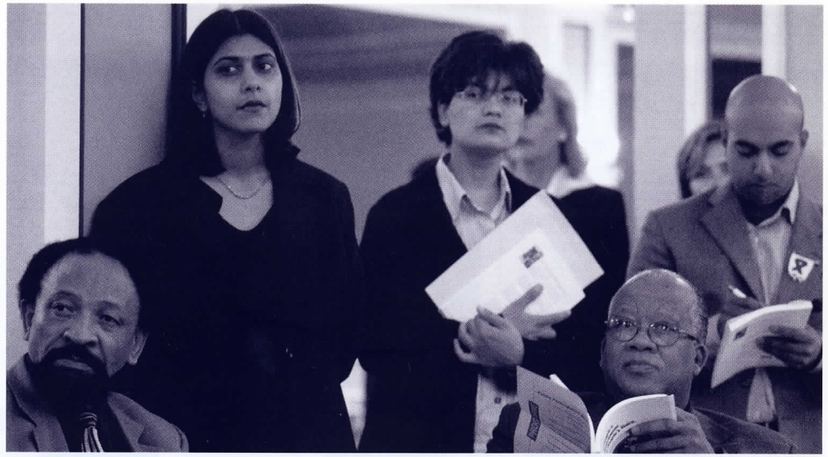
▲ It's assessing results.

PSP REVIEW

What everyone should know about democracy



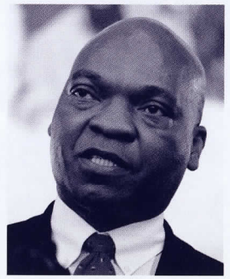
▲ *A People's Government. The People's Voice*, by Susan de Villiers, produced by the Parliamentary Support Programme.



▲ Participants at the launch of *A People's Government. The People's Voice.*

▲ Frene Ginwala (Speaker, NA), Sue de Villiers (author) and Willie Hofmeyer (NDPP).

▲ Naledi Pandor (Chairperson, NCOP).



▲ Mandla Langa (Chairperson, ICASA).

Seven years ago South Africans went to cast their votes in the country's first democratic elections. An important moment.

But of course the act of voting does not ensure democracy, much less participatory democracy. As the Speaker of the National Assembly Frene Ginwala reminded her audience at the launch of this book, democracy is a process.

The Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Naledi Pandor, said she had experienced the robust nature of the participatory democracy in the council, but that it was important for women, especially rural women, to be heard.

What this book, which relies on research by the Political Information Service of the Institute of Democracy in South Africa and Susan De Villiers, does so well is examine the model of democracy that is needed, and in some instances already exists, so that we get the form of democracy we need.

Written in concise English, it is truly an accessible exposition of the state of democracy in South Africa. Clearly laid out with case studies to explain different points of view, it would be a valuable guide for almost everyone who is interested in the process of deepening democracy and the democratic process of governance in South Africa. There is nothing dry or dusty about, which is refreshing. One is left with the feeling that the author set out to inform and open the debate.

I liked the fact that the book opens with a letter from Samuel Kobela, who travelled to Parliament to make an oral submission to the Safety and Security Portfolio Committee on the Firearms Control Bill. What his experience does is to set the stage for the discussion that follows.

South Africans need to be informed about how they can participate in the democratic process and how their points of view fit into the parliamentary process.

This really is a good book, full of sound research, which is put across in a sensible manner. The beauty of the text is that students will be able to follow it as well as adults.

COMPETITION

The first 10 people to fax (021) 403-8137 and leave their name, telephone number and postal address will receive a copy of the book. You can also access it on the following website: www.eupsp.org.za.

Abridged review by Jennifer Crocker, Cape Times ■

"In adopting our new Constitution, we began the process of establishing a vibrant and responsive democracy in South Africa. This book contributes to that process by analysing the role members of the public can play in parliamentary procedures and arguing that such participation is an essential part of our democracy. It is a welcome contribution to the national constitutional project."

JUSTICE KATE O'REGAN
Judge of the Constitutional Court

"Far more than the episodic intervention at election time, the participation of the public in the week-to-week policy and law-making work of government is the real life-blood of democracy. Weak democracies exclude the poor from having a meaningful say in the decisions that affect them; strong democracies welcome and facilitate access."

RICHARD CALLAND, IDASA

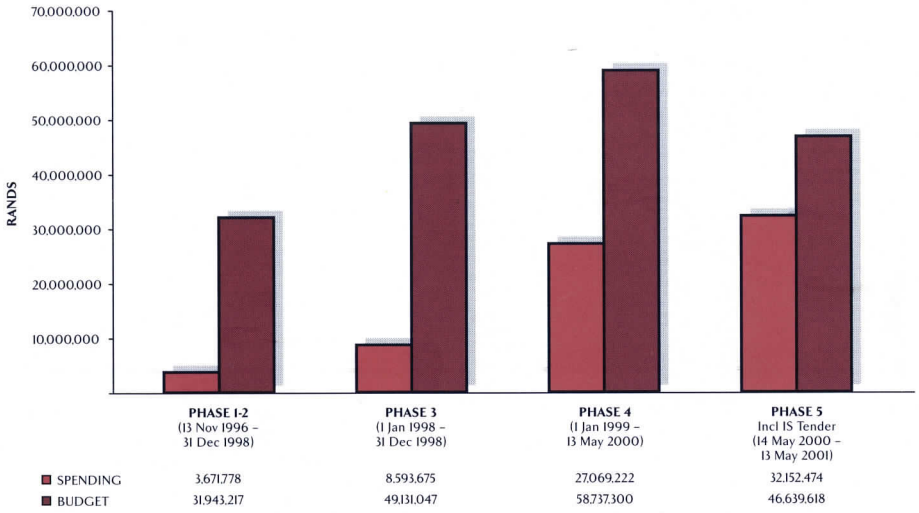
"Any initiative which strives to push the frontiers of public understanding and – by extension – participation in government should be lauded. The ascendancy of this country from the bottomless pit of apartheid to the steady rock of the new democratic dispensation could also be ascribed to public forums in which people determined how they wished to be ruled. This book, which explores their role, should be a required text for everyone involved in public life."

MANDLA LANGA
Chairperson, Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

"The participation of citizens in formulating decisions that affect them is most desirable. But, often, the words sound pious and worn-out. Is it indeed realisable? This is the challenge that genuine democracies face – to bring government to the man and woman in the street. It is South Africa's goal that this should be the case. The point is to make it happen across all spheres of government and among all the people – rich and poor, men and women, young and old. Governance, after all, is about the people."

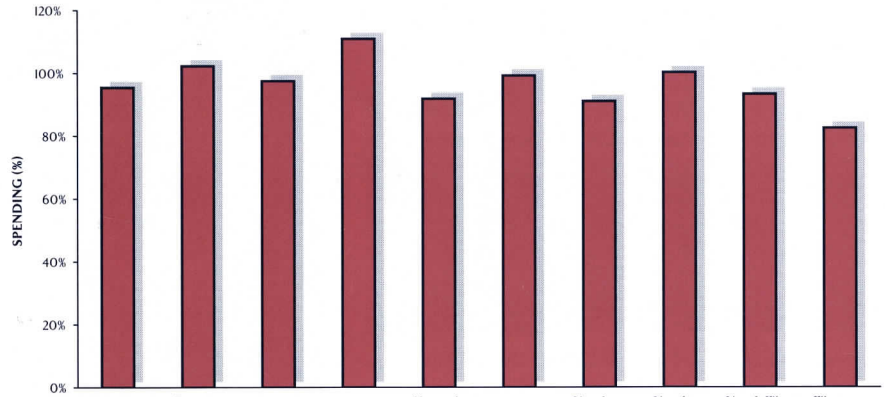
JOEL NETSHITENZHE
Chief Executive Officer, Government Communication and Information System

COMPARISON PER PHASE OF SPENDING vs BUDGET (RANDS)



	PHASE 1-2 (13 Nov 1996 – 31 Dec 1998)	PHASE 3 (1 Jan 1998 – 31 Dec 1998)	PHASE 4 (1 Jan 1999 – 13 May 2000)	PHASE 5 Incl IS Tender (14 May 2000 – 13 May 2001)
SPENDING	3.671.778	8.593.675	27.069.222	32.152.474
BUDGET	31.943.217	49.131.047	58.737.300	46.639.618

PHASE 5 PER LEGISLATURE: SPENDING vs BUDGET (PERCENTAGE) AS AT 13 MAY 2001 (EXCLUDING THE IS TENDER)



	Parliament	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	Kwazulu Natal	Mpumalanga	Northern Cape	Northern Province	North West Province	Western Cape
SPENDING (%)	95%	102%	97%	111%	92%	99%	91%	100%	93%	82%

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Making democracy work

www.eupsp.org.za

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The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the EUPSP.